

elm creek Watershed Management Commission

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
3235 Fernbrook Lane • Plymouth, MN 55447
PH: 763.553.1144 • email: judie@jass.biz
www.elmcreekwatershed.org

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes | August 14, 2024

I. A meeting of the **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order at 10:46 a.m., Wednesday, August 14, 2024, in the Plymouth Community Center, 14800 34th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN, by Chair Derek Asche.

Present: Derek Asche, Maple Grove; Ben Scharenbroich and Jillian Kipp, Plymouth; Diane Spector and Erik Megow, Stantec; Kevin Ellis, Hennepin County Environment and Energy (HCEE); Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); and Judie Anderson, JASS.

Also present: Doug Baines, Dayton.

Not represented: Champlin, Corcoran, Dayton, Medina, and Rogers.

II. A quorum not being present, approvals of the agenda and the June 12, 2024, meeting minutes were waived.

III. **South Fork Rush Creek Subwatershed Assessment.*** In April 2023 the Commission authorized development of a subwatershed assessment for the South Fork Rush Creek drainage area. This \$66,351 study was proposed to be funded \$59,716 from Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF), \$4,976 from Commission funds, and \$1,659 from the benefiting cities (Corcoran, Maple Grove and Medina). The final project cost is expected to be at or just under the approved cost. A draft of that report was presented to the TAC and Commission for review and comment at the April 2024 Commission meeting. A finalized report is now available on the Elm Creek website with no outstanding comments. The Assessment was also shared with City of Corcoran Council Members at their Town Hall Meeting and Stantec Staff member Erik Megow presented a summary to the Council.

The lower reach of South Fork Rush Creek is an Impaired Water for excess *E. coli* bacteria and chloride. This reach, as well as a short segment of South Fork upstream and an Unnamed Tributary, have impaired fish and/or macroinvertebrate communities. Excess nutrient concentration was identified as a primary stressor, and excess sediment as a secondary stressor. The watershedwide TMDL includes required reductions in bacteria and total phosphorus in the streams.

A core team of technical staff from the Commission, Hennepin County, and the cities of Corcoran, Maple Grove, and Medina met to review existing conditions and potential Best Management Practices (BMPs) in this mainly agricultural and rural residential area. With their input, Staff have narrowed the BMPs down to those that appear to be most technically feasible and have ranked the various types of practices based on their cost effectiveness at reducing nutrient and sediment pollution. They also identified properties that may have older individual septic sewer systems in proximity to ditches and streams, and fields that are likely tile-drained, which may be at a higher risk of delivering nutrients and sediment to receiving waters. The final report including tables and figures depicting this information is

available on the Commission's website. However, for ease of use all this data is also available in an online interactive map.

With the finalized report, Elm Creek Staff will continue working with the cities and Hennepin County Staff to realize some of the opportunities that were outlined. Some additional engineering work needs to be done prior to writing grant applications seeking funding assistance.

A consensus of the members present accepted the report, which will be considered at the subsequent regular meeting.

IV. Chloride Management Plan.* The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) opened the annual solicitation for Clean Water Fund (CWF) Grants on June 28, 2024. This year, the program includes *Accelerated Implementation Grants (AIGs)* which aim to build capacity for local governments to accelerate on-the-ground projects that improve or protect water quality and perform above and beyond existing state standards for protecting and restoring water quality.

In July, the Commission authorized Stantec to proceed with development of a proposal for an AIG for a joint chloride management plan between the Shingle Creek, West Mississippi, and Elm Creek WMOs. The management plan will include data analysis and source assessment, identifying stakeholders and their responsibilities, implementation strategies and goals, and how to assess progress. A draft* of the proposal is included in the meeting packet.

A meeting held on August 13 with a volunteer advisory group helped refine the grant proposal further. That meeting was called to make sure that the grant application includes outcomes that will be most helpful to city staffs. Staff will incorporate any desired edits and plan to submit the proposal by the BWSR deadline of August 22.

V. Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) – Updates.*

The WBIF convene group met for its final meeting on July 15. The group reached consensus on projects to submit for WBIF funding. The chosen projects total \$373,590 and require a minimum of 10% match for projects. The match for the education and outreach coordinator will be provided through the WMWA budget and Hennepin County, while the match for the other projects could be provided from Hennepin County, the Commission's closed projects account or cost share programs, and other local sources. A description of the chosen projects is below.

A. Hennepin County Conservation Specialist (\$46,000). Joint funding for this position from the five participating WMOs will continue through FY2024-2025. The position is a limited duration position to provide water and natural resources education and outreach and technical assistance to residents that leads to implementation of conservation practices.

B. Agricultural BMPs (\$175,000). Hennepin County staff have worked with the Commission to implement BMPs identified in the various subwatershed assessments (SWAs) and other related agricultural and rural BMPs funded in part by a Clean Water Fund grant. In the last WBIF round of funding the Elm Creek convene group dedicated \$175,000 and this allocation would continue that work for another two years.

C. Diamond Lake Neighborhood BMPs (\$108,000 WBIF, \$120,000 total). The Diamond

Creek SWA identified three potential urban area BMPs identified in the Diamond Creek SWA that are proposed for funding.

D. Rice and Fish Lakes Fish and Habitat Management (\$44,590). Both lakes have previously undergone rough fish management and would likely benefit from additional rough fish management. In addition, the Fish Lake fish community was recently designated as impaired and may benefit from some as yet unspecified fish and/or habitat management. This funding would be available to manage biotic integrity in these lakes, although the specific actions have yet to be developed. The Commission, Three Rivers Park District, the City of Maple Grove, lake associations, and Staff will work together over the next several months to determine a course of action and a funding plan that will likely include not only WBIF funding but also contributions from all the stakeholders.

Final WBIF allocations by watershed.

Funding Priority	Total Cost	WBIF	Match	Source of Match
Education & outreach coordinator*	\$306,000	\$46,000	\$77,000	WMWA and county (\$77K); other WBIF**
County outreach/cost-share	\$192,500	\$175,000	\$17,500	County staff time and \$, landowner in-kind and \$
Diamond Lake Neighborhood BMPs	\$120,000	\$108,000	\$12,000	City Cost Share or Closed Projects, City
Rice and Fish Lakes Fish and Habitat Management	\$49,050	\$44,590	\$4,460	City/Partnership Cost Share, City, landowners
TOTAL	\$667,550	\$373,590	\$168,960	

*Contracted to Hennepin County

**Shingle Creek, West Mississippi, Bassett , and Richfield-Bloomington WMOs are each contributing \$46,000 from their WBIF funds

VI. TMDL 10-YEAR REVIEW.* Earlier this year the Commission authorized Staff to undertake a review of progress toward meeting the goals of the 2016 Elm Creek Watershed TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load). The Elm Creek TMDL study addresses: seven lake *nutrient* impairments (Cowley, Sylvan, Henry, Rice, Fish, Diamond, Goose); four stream *E. coli* impairments; three stream *dissolved oxygen (DO)* impairments; and four stream *fish and macroinvertebrate* impairments, with primary stressors *total phosphorus (TP)* and *total suspended solids (TSS)*.

Since completion of the 2016 Watershed TMDL, there are new impairments, along with one delisting. Elm Creek and the lower reach of South Fork Rush Creek are impaired for excess *chloride*. Elm Creek is now impaired for *TSS* and Fish Lake for *fish biotic integrity (F-IBI)*. The Fish Lake nutrient impairment was removed or “delisted” as the lake now meets state standards.

A. The TMDL Review is comprised of four tasks:

1. Obtain additional water quality data in lakes and streams that are not routinely monitored.
2. Compile data on load-reducing practices that have been implemented since the

baseline year of 2010, including reductions achieved through development projects and other practices such as stream restorations, ponds or other BMPs, enhanced street sweeping, etc.

3. Evaluate monitoring data to determine any trends.
4. Review the implementation plan and make any necessary adjustments based on

findings.

B. Project Status.

1. Three Rivers Park District is proceeding with Task 1 in 2024 and 2025. Four additional lakes and two additional stream sites on the South and North Forks of Rush Creek will be monitored using a combination of current operating budget and study budget.

2. Stantec staff have started to assemble data on load reductions for each project that triggered the Stormwater Rule. The purpose of compiling this data is that the TMDL noted that 60-80% of the upper watershed was likely to change land use from agricultural and other land uses to development incorporating stormwater management. Adoption of more stringent rules requiring infiltration and treatment was expected to accomplish significant reductions, although no specific numeric goals were established. Compiling this data will help us understand the impact of those requirements and the role of regulation in meeting TMDL goals. There are a total of 256 unique projects that had TP or TSS load reduction data between 2010 and 2023.

C. Initial Findings.

Load reductions are occurring as a result of land use conversion and development. The results show that this has been occurring to a greater extent in more recent years which is a product of the change in rules, requiring volume control (filtration/infiltration) and requiring water quality calculations (better data). Assuming each project has continued to reduce loads at the originally reported rate, the total load reduction rate achieved through development projects since 2010 was 1,365 lbs./year TP and 526,271 lbs./year TSS.

Overall, the reductions achieved through regulated development are a fraction of the load reductions needed. Staff will present more data at the regular meeting showing how the reductions compare to the TMDL requirements. As they continue the TMDL review, Staff will compile more reduction data through review of larger BMPs (stream stabilization, regional ponds, street sweeping).

D. Next Steps.

1. Staff are compiling reductions from stream restoration projects and other CIP projects and will be sending out a data request to cities requesting information about any other BMPs that may have been undertaken in the various drainage areas. The final step will be to sum up all these reductions and compare them to the load reductions called for in the TMDLs.

2. Staff will also be working with Three Rivers to analyze water quality data to determine if there are any statistically significant trends. It is likely that only some of the lake and stream sites have enough data to be statistically valid, which is why it was recommended that addi-

tional monitoring be completed. As the period of record grows the trend results will be clearer and more meaningful.

3. The balance of the data compilation and trend analysis phase of the TMDL review will be completed by the end of 2024. Staff plan to present that data at the November 2024 meeting. In December 2024 they will review the TMDL Implementation Plan and discuss any changes or additions so those actions can be incorporated into the Fourth Generation Plan.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judie A. Anderson
Recording Secretary

Z:\Elm Creek\TAC\2024\August 14 2024 TAC mins.docx